

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims, as follows:

1. (original) An epoxy hardener composition having a cure temperature of between about 60-100°C, comprising a mixture of:

- a) one of imidazole and a trihydric compound having methylol groups at the 2- and 6- positions formed by reacting a 4-alkyl phenol with 2 moles of formaldehyde;
- b) trimethylolpropane; and
- c) one of tetramethylguanadine and tetramethylguanadine adduct.

2. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 1, wherein component a) of the mixture is imidazole.

3. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 2, further comprising an accelerator for decreasing the curing time.

4. (currently amended) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 2, wherein the trimethylolpropane is a mixture of trimethylolpropane with a component selected from the group consisting of bisphenols, dihydric phenols, adduct of a bisphenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a dihydric phenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a dihydric phenol, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole diethanolamine and one mole formaldehyde, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole N,N(diethylamino)-3-propylamine and one mole formaldehyde, trimethylolpropane, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 1 mole of a monoglycidyl compound,

adduct of a bisphenol with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a dihydric phenol with 1-3 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of 0-cresyl glycidylether with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct formed by first reacting trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of 0-cresyl glycidylether followed by reacting additional 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a monohydric phenol capable of ring substitution, followed by reaction with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a monoglycidyl compound with 1 mole of a monohydric phenol capable of ring substitution followed by reacting 1 mole of trimethylolpropane, trihydric compound formed by reacting a 4-alkyl phenol with 2 moles of formaldehyde to produce methylol groups at the 2- and 6- positions, and 2-ethyl-4-methylimidazole.

5. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 3, wherein the accelerator is a phenolic hardener.

6. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 5, wherein the phenolic hardener is one of an adduct formed by reacting 1 mole p-cresol, 1 mole diethanolamine and 1 mole formaldehyde, and an adduct formed by reacting 1 mole p-cresol, 1 mole diethylaminopropylamine and 1 mole formaldehyde.

7. (original) An epoxy hardener composition comprising a mixture of a tertiary amine, imidazole and a methylol-functional compound.

8. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 7, wherein the imidazole, tertiary amine, and methylol-functional compound are present in molar ratios

between 2:1:1 and 1:2:1.

9. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 7, wherein the tertiary amine is one of tetramethylguanidine and tetramethylguanidine adduct.

10. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 8, wherein the methylol-functional compound is trimethylolpropane.

11. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 10, further comprising an accelerator for decreasing the curing time.

12. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 11, wherein the accelerator is a phenolic hardener.

13. (currently amended) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 9, wherein the methylol-functional compound comprises a mixture of trimethylolpropane and a component selected from the group consisting of bisphenols, dihydric phenols, adduct of a bisphenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a dihydric phenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a dihydric phenol, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole diethanolamine and one mole formaldehyde, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole N,N(diethylamino)-3-propylamine and one mole formaldehyde, trimethylolpropane, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 1 mole of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a bisphenol with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct

of a dihydric phenol with 1-3 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of 0-cresyl glycidylether with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct formed by first reacting trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of 0-cresyl glycidylether followed by reacting additional 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a monohydric phenol capable of ring substitution, followed by reaction with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a monoglycidyl compound with 1 mole of a monohydric phenol capable of ring substitution followed by reacting 1 mole of trimethylolpropane, trihydric compound formed by reacting a 4-alkyl phenol with 2 moles of formaldehyde to produce methylol groups at the 2- and 6- positions, and 2-ethyl-4-methylimidazole.

14. (currently amended) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 7, wherein the methylol-functional compound is a mixture of trimethylolpropane with a component selected from the group consisting of bisphenols; dihydric phenols, adduct of a bisphenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound; adduct of a dihydric phenol with 1-2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a dihydric phenol, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole diethanolamine and one mole formaldehyde, adduct of a 4-alkyl phenol with 1 mole N,N(diethylamino)-3-propylamine and one mole formaldehyde, trimethylolpropane, adduct of trimethylolpropane with 1 mole of a monoglycidyl compound, adduct of a bisphenol with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane; adduct of a dihydric phenol with 1-3 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of 0-cresyl glycidylether with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct formed by first reacting trimethylolpropane with 2 moles of 0-cresyl glycidylether followed by reacting additional 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a diglycidyl compound with 2 moles of a monohydric phenol

capable of ring substitution, followed by reaction with 2 moles of trimethylolpropane, adduct of a monoglycidyl compound with 1 mole of a monohydric phenol capable of ring substitution followed by reacting 1 mole of trimethylolpropane, trihydric compound formed by reacting a 4-alkyl phenol with 2 moles of formaldehyde to produce methylol groups at the 2- and 6- positions, and 2-ethyl-4-methylimidazole.

15. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 7, further comprising an accelerator for decreasing the curing time.

16. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 15, wherein the accelerator is a phenolic hardener.

17. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 16, wherein the phenolic hardener is one of an adduct formed by reacting 1 mole p-cresol, 1 mole diethanolamine and 1 mole formaldehyde and an adduct formed by reacting 1 mole p-cresol, 1 mole diethylaminopropylamine and 1 mole formaldehyde.

18. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 1, wherein the tetramethylguanidine adduct is a reaction product of tetramethylguanidine and a diglycidylether.

19. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 9, wherein the tetramethylguanidine adduct is a reaction product of tetramethylguanidine and a diglycidylether.

20. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 1, wherein component a) of the mixture is the trihydric compound having methylol groups at the 2- and 6- positions formed by reacting a 4-alkyl phenol with 2 moles of formaldehyde.

21. (original) An epoxy hardener composition according to claim 20, wherein the trihydric compound is 2, 6-bis(hydroxymethyl)-p-cresol.